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H.H. Warner & Co. “Safe Remedies” Major Double Transfer of Central Vignette on 6¢ Medicine Stamp, RS258dt

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This is the first in a series of articles in which I shall revisit previously described double transfers on U.S. private die proprietary revenue stamps which have either never been seen in publication or only via grainy B&W images or drawings.

I will briefly review the history of the proprietors, their wares, and the issued stamps. By presenting high-resolution, digital color images of the salient features of the design doubling, the reader will garner a new appreciation for these unusual and uncommon plate production varieties.

In the 1880s, H.H. Warner & Co. had engraved and printed five private die proprietary medicine stamps in brown ink on watermarked paper to seal the bottles containing their Warner’s Safe Kidney & Liver Cure, Rheumatic Cure, and Nervine nostrums. These stamps feature visual and verbal word play: “Safe Remedies” is inscribed on an image of a safe! Even better, a strong double transfer of the central vignette has been found on just one stamp from this series, the 6¢ strip stamp denoted as RS258dt.

The design shift (west and south) is seen in the center left of the vignette. It is most prominent in “PROPRIETARY”, the left horizontal background design lines protruding into the white arch; all the letters of “REMEDIES” and the left wheels and outer frame line of the safe; and the palm tree and fronds, the left hand, right hand and face of the kneeling native, and the lower left herbs near the ground.

And the search continues; might the 2¢ and 4¢ strips from this series exhibit a similar double transfer?